

YOUNG WOMEN FARMERS IN THE SCOPE OF THE YOUNG FARMERS GRANT SUPPORT PROJECT: THE CASE OF KIRIKKALE PROVINCE IN TURKIYE

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This study aimed to reveal the situation of young women farmers (YWFs) who benefited from cattle farming support for three years in Kirikkale, one of the provinces where the study was carried out. In Kirikkale province, 397 young farmers were supported and 250 of them were YWFs. The projects with the highest grant support were cattle farming projects, and they constituted 62.22% of the projects (247 units). The rate of YWF who benefited from cattle farming support for three years was higher than young men farmers (YMF) and was determined as 59.51%. In this study, face-to-face survey questionnaires were filled in the 2020 year with 36 YWFs and 36 YMFs. As a result of the study, it was determined that YMFs have more experience in cattle breeding than YWFs. It is seen that especially YWFs are married and their families have high non-agricultural income; their husbands support especially YWFs at the application stage. 52.78% of YWFs and 69.44% of YMFs stated that they want to expand their farms with the given support. As a result of the study, it was determined that there was a significant increase in the number of animals after the given support to the young farmers, and it was revealed that the most important problem of the young farmers was that they had financial difficulties in the supply of production inputs. It is seen that this project, which has both social and economic aspects, encourages YWFs to take more part in agricultural activities. However, it is important to determine more effective criteria at the selection stage, follow up and supervise the beneficiaries of the incentives both during and after the project, and support the successful ones to grow their farms.

Keywords: Young women farmers, young farmers project support, rural development, kirikkale-Turkiye.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important problems experienced in rural areas is the problem of "aging" in the World (UNECE, 2017) and also in Turkiye (Kan *et al.*, 2020). This situation brings the problem of leaving the young population from agricultural activities in rural areas where agricultural activities are intense. Most rural youths are unemployed in developing countries and lack educational opportunities and access to essential services. Rural job opportunities, especially in the agricultural sector, do not meet the needs and demands of young people. This situation causes outward migration, social deterioration in rural areas, and an increasing profile of elderly farmers. These problems make agricultural enterprises more vulnerable to the deterioration of natural resources, climate change and shocks. As future managers of ecosystems and food systems, countries need to invest in rural youth to achieve sustainable long-term economic development that is

resistant to future crises and shocks and contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (FAO, 2020).

Looking at the general situation in Turkiye, the fact that nearly half of Turkiye's population is under the age of 30 necessitates increasing the employment opportunities of young people and making them sustainable. Young people are moving away from agriculture due to lack of income, limited social opportunities in villages, fragmented or very few lands, and lack of alternative employment opportunities in rural areas. The departure of young people from agriculture brings problems such as the aging and decrease of the population living in rural areas. In Turkiye, the general employment level in agriculture has been decreasing in recent years, and it is observed that the separation of the young population from the agricultural sector has gained significant momentum.

In order to provide employment to the youth in rural areas and develop the agricultural sector by keeping them in their places, the "Young Farmers Grant Support Project (YFGP)" started to support the youth in Turkiye in 2016. In the project,



30,000 TL per person was given initial support for young farmers aged 18-40 for three years between 2016-2018 in Türkiye, in return for dealing with agricultural activities determined in rural areas (Official Gazette, 2016). In total, 47,775 young farmers were supported in 3 years, and livestock projects had a significant share in these supports (TOB, 2021). Support was given in many areas within this project's scope, from plant production to animal production. One of the supports provided within the scope of this project, which serves the purposes of both the young population to engage in agricultural activities and to protect this population in the rural area, is the cattle farming support.

Another dimension of this project is positive gender discrimination against women. One of the common points reached in the studies conducted in Türkiye is the necessity of empowering women in achieving success in rural development (Gülçubuk *et al.*, 2011; Özmete, 2012; Soysal, 2013). Particularly in the first year, women were handled within the scope of the disadvantaged group, and positive discrimination was provided to them and women were encouraged to benefit more from the project supports. In Türkiye, not only within the scope of this project but also in many studies, there is support for women's entrepreneurship, and the main question is whether this positive discrimination achieves its purpose. For this purpose, YWFs and YMFs who benefited from the cattle breeding support provided for three years (2016-2018) in Kırıkkale province within the scope of YFGP were interviewed. This study tried to determine to what extent YWFs and YMFs benefited from this project and what kind of situations they faced both before and after the project.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary material of this study consisted of the data obtained from 36 women and 36 men young farmers living in the center and districts of Kırıkkale province (Figure 1), engaged in agricultural activities between the ages of 18-40, and who were entitled to receive Cattle Support from the YFGP in 2016-2017-2018. In order to determine the socio-economic conditions, farming problems, farming perceptions and future expectations of young farmers and to understand comparatively the status of men and women farmers benefiting from supports in cattle breeding, a questionnaire was prepared and primary data were obtained as a result of face-to-face interviews.

The number of young farmers who received support from YFGP in Kırıkkale province for 2016-2017-2018 years is 397. The number of young farmers receiving support from the project for cattle breeding was 78 (60 women and 18 men) for the 2016 year, 80 people (43 women and 37 men) for the 2017 year 89 (44 women and 45 men) for the 2018 year. The number of young farmers who received support for cattle breeding in the total research area was 247.



Figure 1. Kırıkkale Province Map.

The study population consists of 247 young men and women farmers who received grant support for cattle breeding of the YFSP between 2016-2018 in Kırıkkale center and its other eight districts. Seventy-two young farmers, 36 women and 36 men were selected from this population using the "Simple Random Sampling Method." Simple Random Sampling Method was used because young farmers consisted of homogeneous people close to each other.

In the study, it was aimed to determine the agricultural production characteristics of male-female young farmers, to evaluate the comparative benefit of young women and men farmers benefiting from supports, to determine their satisfaction levels, to determine their agricultural status before and after support, and to determine the possible future application. A survey study was conducted to make suggestions about the supports.

The Chi-square analysis method was used (Orhunbilge, 2000) to analyze categorical data with two or more answers such as "Yes-No" collected from the research area by questionnaire and in understanding the possible statistical relationship between young men and women farmers benefiting from the project. In the study, a 5-point Likert Scale was used to measure the attitudes of male and female young farmers towards supports and to determine their status before and after support.

Two groups were formed as young men and women farmers in the study. In the comparative analysis phase of the continuous variables considered according to the groups, whether the variables used showed normal distribution or not was determined with the "Two Independent Samples Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z Test-(K-S Z Test)." T-Test was used in cases where normal distribution was provided in order to compare the benefiting status of the groups from the support and to determine the status before and after the support. The t-test is used to test whether there is a statistically significant difference between the variables and whether the observed mean value differs from the predicted value. If the distribution is not normal, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z Test, one of the non-parametric tests, was used in the comparative analysis to

determine whether there is a statistical difference between the groups (Kesici and Kocabaş, 2007).

The workforce in the examined agricultural holdings was converted into a male labor force unit (MLU) by considering the age and gender of the existing population. In the presence of animals, animal species according to age and sex were converted into Large Animal Unit (LAU). In both conversion, the coefficients were used according to Erkuş *et al.* (1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the agricultural enterprises examined in the research region are

presented in Table 1. The table was created in 2 groups like young men and women farmers. When the table is examined, it can be seen that there are statistically significant changes between young men and women farmers in terms of some socio-demographic and economic characteristics. When the descriptive statistics of young men and women farmers are examined as a result of the interviews in the research area, the ages of YWFs and YMFs are similar, with an average of 29.76 years. When similar studies in Türkiye are examined, Beşen *et al.* (2021) found the average age of young farmers receiving support in the TR61 region to be 28.18 years and their average agricultural experience to be 7.82 years. Their study stated that 86.1% of the young farmers had primary and secondary

Table 1 . Some Socio-Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Young Farmers Families.

Variables		Sex of young farmers						Chi-Square / t-test
		Young women farmers		young men farmers		Average		
		%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	
Young Farmers Age in The Support Year			29.92		29.61		29.76	0.22
Marital Status (%)	Single	13.89		36.11		25.00		4.74**
	Married	86.11		63.89		75.00		
Education Level (%)	Primary	38.89		25.00		31.94		2.57
	Secondary	33.33		38.89		36.11		
	High School	16.67		27.78		22.22		
	Vac. School	5.56		2.78		4.17		
	University	5.56		5.56		5.56		
Household Number (Person)			4.83		4.08		4.46	2.47**
	Male		2.44		2.14		2.29	1.78*
	Female		2.39		1.94		2.17	2.18**
Total Man Labour Unit (MLU)			2.92		2.56		2.74	2.24**
Number of People Engaged in Farming in the Family			2.36		2.36		2.36	-
	Male		1.25		1.42		1.33	-1.09
	Female		1.11		.94		1.03	1.42
Total Farmer MLU			1.90		1.92		1.91	-0.10
Young Farmer Farming Experience (Year)			13.06		17.61		15.33	-1.74*
Family Farming Experience (Year)			34.86		35.94		35.40	-0.23
Young Farmer Cattle Breeding Experience (Year)			9.44		17.53		13.49	-2.81***
Family Cattle Breeding Experience (Year)			30.25		35.19		32.72	-1.05
Family Type (%)	Mother and father	11.11		36.11		23.61		9.47**
	Spouse and Children	66.67		58.33		62.50		
	Extended family	19.44		2.78		11.11		
	Living Alone	2.78		2.78		2.78		
Agricultural Income (TL/Year)			34028.57		30697.14		32362.86	0.72
Non-Farm Income (TL/Year)			17177.14		9805.71		13491.43	1.84*

*90%, **95%, ***99% Confidence level is statistically significant.

education. Başaranoğlu and Yılmaz (2020) stated that the average young farmers' age was 28.4 years and their average agricultural experience was seven years. Altintas et al. (2020) stated that 45% of the young farmers have 6-10 years of agricultural experience. Çelik (2018) found the average young farmers' age to be 27.24 years and the average agricultural experience of 6.98 years.

The marital status of the YWFs is married and they live in a more crowded family environment than the YMFs. The single rate is higher among YMFs shows that, especially in 2016, men (husbands) apply on behalf of women (wives) rather than themselves. While there was no statistically significant difference between the farming and cattle breeding experiences of the young farmers' families, it was determined that young male farmers had more experience in both farming and cattle breeding than women. This situation can also be considered a result of the fact that women are shown in support applications by their spouses and families, especially since women have positive discrimination in the grant support program. In addition, the fact that non-agricultural income is higher in YWFs' families shows that especially men (husband or father) are more involved in non-agricultural activities in these families. Dogan *et al.* (2018), Altintas *et al.* (2020), Beşen *et al.* (2021) stated in their studies that the majority of the beneficiaries of the support were women because of the positive discrimination provided to women in the grant support of young farmers. In addition, it is stated that a significant part of the young farmers who benefit from the support do not have non-agricultural income.

Within the Young Farmer Grant Support Program (YFGP) framework, selections were made every year within the framework of specific criteria in determining the young farmers who will benefit from the grant support. Kan et al. (2019) evaluated the selection criteria of young farmers within the scope of YFGP in their study in the TR71 Region in Türkiye, which includes Kırıkkale province. As a result of

the study, they stated that respectively; the people that are female, married, between the ages of 18-30, applying from settlements with a population of 1000 or less, having an education in agricultural production, who have a disability/being a relative of a martyr/veteran, and an annual income of 10.000 TL or less, benefited from this support at a higher rate. One of the important criteria is the capital status of the grant (YFGP) recipient and their family. In Table 2, some land and agricultural equipment capital evaluations are made. When the table is examined, it has been determined that the agricultural land availability of the YWF's families is lower than the YMF's families, and this difference is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. In addition, it was determined that a large part of the families of both young farmer groups did not have a tractor (62.50%) and did not have sufficient agricultural equipment (69.44%). The difference was not found statistically significant.

Information sources of young farmers about project support, people who are influential in the application, and how they cover production costs are presented in Table 3. When the table is examined, no statistically significant difference was found between YWFs and YMFs according to the variables examined. While the most important source of information about the project is the Provincial/District Directorates of Agriculture and Forestry, it has been determined that the practical person in the application to the project is the young farmer himself. In the animal production initiated with the project, the producer's capital was first in meeting the costs. In studies on this subject, Çağlayan *et al.* (2020) stated that 27.5% of young farmers heard about this program from the District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, 27.5% from their immediate surroundings, 25.7% from the internet, 17.4% from television and only 1.8% from the university. In their study, Alkan and Özkan (2020) determined that 53.5% of young farmers' sources of being aware of the project were information sources such as the Internet/TV/Newspaper, etc.,

Table 2. Land and Agricultural Machinery Ownership of Young Farmers.

Variables		Sex of Young Farmers						Chi-Square-K-S-Z Test
		Young women farmers		Young men farmers		Average		
		Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	
Total Agricultural (Land(Ha)		5.57		9.16		7.37		-1.95*
Property Land (Ha)		1.92		3.00		2.46		-1.71*
Family Owned Land (Ha)		0.94		3.58		2.26		-0.42
Rented Land (Ha)		0.93		1.08		1.01		-1.15
Shared Land (Ha)		1.78		1.49		1.64		-0.73
Total Number of Parcel		1.33		2.25		1.79		-1.49
Irrigated Land (Ha))		0.33		0.21		0.27		0.32
Tractor Asset (%)	No		61.11		63.89		62.50	0.06
	Yes		38.89		36.11		37.50	
Sufficient Agric. Equipment Availability (%)	No		77.78		61.11		69.44	2.36
	Yes		22.22		38.89		30.56	

*90%, **95%, ***99% Confidence level is statistically significant.

Table 3. Effective Factors and in Young Farmer Grant Project Application and Production Capital.

Variables		Sex of Young Farmers			Chi-Square
		Young women farmers	Young men farmers	Average	
		%	%	%	
How to Be Aware of the YFGP	Provincial/District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry	80.56	66.67	73.61	5.12
	Internet	0.00	5.56	2.78	
	Television	8.33	13.89	11.11	
	Muhtar (Head of Village)	0.00	2.78	1.39	
	Family Members	0.00	2.78	1.39	
	Other People	11.11	8.33	9.72	
	Husband's	16.67	5.56	11.11	
Influential Person in Support Application	Persistence/Suggestion				4.87
	Other Individuals in the Household	11.11	11.11	11.11	
	Her Wish	41.67	58.33	50.00	
	Provincial/District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry	19.44	22.22	20.83	
	Other People	11.11	2.78	6.94	
	Own Family	5.56	13.89	9.72	
	Relatives Outside the Household	0.00	2.78	1.39	
How to Cover Production Costs	Credit Usage	36.11	19.44	27.78	4.75
	Futures Purchase	5.56	11.11	8.33	
	Own Equity Capital	52.78	52.78	52.78	

*90%, **95%, ***99% Confidence level is statistically significant.

while 40.2% were Provincial/District Directorates of Agriculture and Forestry. It is stated that the most important persons in the application to the project are the young farmer himself/herself and his wife/her husband.

In Figure 1, the satisfaction levels of young farmers from the support provided are given. A scoring system of 10 was made and the overall satisfaction score was calculated as 8.56. It has been determined that young male farmers benefiting from the support are more satisfied with the project outputs than young female farmers, and the difference is statistically significant. Many reasons affect the concept of satisfaction. Studies on this subject indicate that the quality of the animals supplied and their suitability for the region are important factors (Doğan *et al.* 2018; Yılmaz and Keskin, 2020, Çağlayan *et al.* 2020).

Another subject examined in the study is the gains of young farmers with the project. Table 4 shows young farmers' plans and ways to expand the farms. While 61.11% of the young farmers were considering expanding the farms, 87.50% stated they enlarged their farms thanks to this project. The young farmer's capital takes the first place in the financial planning of young farmers to expand their farms. This situation varies according to YFFs and YMFs groups. Especially in the YMFs, the idea of getting a loan in addition to his capital in the financial plan takes an integral part in expanding the farms. In the studies on this subject, Alkan and Özkan (2020)

stated that 62.2% of young farmers had the opportunity to establish a farm with the Young Farmer Support Project. Altıntaş *et al.* (2019) stated that 65.83% of young farmers started production with this project.

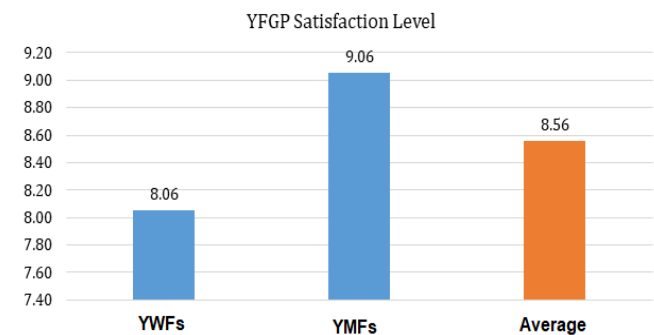


Figure 1. Satisfaction Levels (10 Point Scoring) of Young Farmers from the Young Farmer Grant Project (YFGP) Program (K-S-Z Test:-1,66; p:0,09)

Table 5 shows young farmers' achievements related to this project. When the table is examined, it is seen that the two most essential returns of the project are in social and human capital. Especially the development of young farmers' relations with official institutions and the significant developments in the level of knowledge about animal

Table 4. Young Farmers' Idea to Grow the Business.

Variables		Sex of Young Farmers			Chi-Square
		Young women farmers	Young men farmers	Average	
		%	%	%	
Agr. Enterprise Growth Thought	No	47.22	30.56	38.89	2.10
	Yes	52.78	69.44	61.11	
The Impact of the Project on the Idea of Growing the Agr. Enterprise	No	9.52	14.81	12.50	0.30
	Yes	90.48	85.19	87.50	
Capital Procurement Plan	Equity Capital	84.21	63.64	73.17	4.54*
	Credit	10.53	36.36	24.39	
	Debt from Relatives	5.26	.00	2.44	

*90%, **95%, ***99% Confidence level is statistically significant.

Table 5. Achievements of Young Farmers from the Young Farmer Grant Support Program (5 Points).

Variables	Sex of Young Farmers			K-S-Z Value
	Young women farmers	Young men farmers	Average	
My communication with official institutions has increased	4.22	4.67	4.44	-1.35
My production knowledge and experience on the subject within the scope of support has increased	4.22	4.56	4.39	-0.98
My income increased compared to pre-support	4.22	4.56	4.39	-0.98
Animal count increased compared to pre-support	4.00	4.56	4.28	-1.52
My workload has increased compared to pre-support	4.22	4.11	4.17	-0.29
My ownership of the business has increased compared to pre-support	3.78	4.11	3.94	-0.80
Compared to before the support, my communication with people increased	3.33	3.89	3.61	-1.23
My awareness of this type of support has increased compared to pre-support	3.44	3.67	3.56	-0.49
My self-confidence increased compared to pre-support	3.11	3.56	3.33	-0.95
My sense of belonging to the place I live increased compared to pre-support	3.22	3.33	3.28	-0.24
My economic independence has increased compared to pre-support	2.78	3.22	3.00	-0.94
My capital/savings increased compared to pre-support	2.67	2.89	2.78	-0.47
My participation in decisions on agricultural production increased compared to pre-support	2.44	2.67	2.56	-0.48
My debts have increased compared to pre-support	2.89	2.22	2.56	-1.44
My hopes and expectations for the future increased compared to pre-support	2.00	3.00	2.50	-2.18**
My dependence on my family in terms of income decreased compared to pre-support	1.89	2.67	2.28	-1.76*
My level of technology usage has increased compared to pre-support	1.78	1.22	1.50	-1.77*
My land presence has increased compared to pre-support	1.44	1.44	1.44	0.00
The number of people I employed increased compared to pre-support	1.33	1.56	1.44	-0.74
My personal expenses have increased compared to pre-support	1.22	1.11	1.17	-0.59
I benefit more from agricultural supports than compared to pre-support	1.22	1.11	1.17	-0.59
My forage crops production area has increased compared to pre-support	1.00	1.11	1.06	-1.00
My tool equipment amount has increased compared to pre-support	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00

*90%, **95%, ***99% Confidence level is statistically significant.

production have been shown as the most significant achievements of this project. In addition, the third and fourth elements among the project achievements are economically oriented. The increase in animal capital and income increase has been shown among the economic gains in this project. These achievements do not show a statistically significant difference between YWFs and YMFs. In the study of Sari Gedik (2019) with young farmers in Tekirdağ province, it was

shown that the most significant contribution of the project for female farmers (52.6%) was to own a business for the first time, and the most significant contribution for male farmers (41.7%) was that they expanded their existing businesses. It was determined that women contributed more than men to increase their self-confidence (19.3%) and increase their goals (5.3%).

The numerical dimension of the achievements is presented in

Table 6. Benefits of Young Farmers from the Young Farmer Grant Support Program.

Variables	Sex of Young Farmers			K-S-Z Value
	Young women farmers	Young men farmers	Average	
Agricultural Equipment Capital Before Support (TL)	27333.33	26402.78	26868.06	0.59
Agricultural Equipment Capital After Support (TL)	32819.44	32625.00	32722.22	0.59
Total Large Animal Unit (LAU) Before Support	3.92	4.76	4.34	0.94
<i>The Number of Cattle (LAU)</i>	3.24	4.32	3.78	1.06
<i>The Number of Other Animals (LAU)</i>	0.68	0.43	0.55	0.35
Total LAU After Support	10.52	10.94	10.73	0.59
<i>The Number of Cattle (LAU)</i>	8.57	9.94	9.25	1.06
<i>The Number of Other Animals (LAU)</i>	1.95	1.00	1.48	0.94
Pre-Support Family Labor Man Labour Unit (MLU)	1.31	1.67	1.49	0.71
Pre-Support Family Labor Man Labour Day (MLD)	61.78	59.56	60.67	0.94
After Support Family Labor MLU	1.81	2.00	1.90	0.47
After Support Family Labor MLD	106.56	134.44	120.50	0.71

Table 6. When Table 6 is examined, there are severe increases in the value of agricultural equipment, the number of animals and the labor force spent for the enterprise after the support compared to before the support. These increases are not statistically significant compared to YWFs and YMFs. This shows that both YWFs and YMFs make similar achievements in this project.

Conclusion: As a result of the study, it was determined that there were no significant differences in the general effects of the project between YWFs and YMFs. With the positive discrimination created especially for women in the first years, it was expected that they would take a more significant role in the agricultural production process and contribute more positively to the economic development process. For this reason, YWFs were encouraged to receive more grants from the projects. In Kırıkkale Province, 11,910,000 TL grant was paid to 397 young farmers in 2016-2017-2018 years. Among these supports, 247 young farmers were given cattle support. One hundred seven of these supports were given to YWFs. The segment that most benefited from the livestock support was the YWFs. However, in the field study conducted in the research area, it was determined that most YWFs were not entrepreneurs. It has been observed that the existence of female farmers, whose husband or father is the manager of the enterprise, is limited to the application stage only and that the male-dominated family structure continues in their social lives.

After the support, there was a significant increase in the number of animals of young farmers. Among the animal breeds taken from the Supports in Kırıkkale province, the highest rate of 70.83% is the Simmental-Montofon animal breed. However, young farmers have tried to change their animal breeds over time. They showed that the reason for this was that the animals came very small and unqualified and that the milk yield of the animals was low.

The most important problem of young farmers is the supply of production inputs. Young farmers have experienced financial difficulties in particular. Over time, the incomes of young farmers did not increase, but there was a decrease in the income of young farmers due to long-term care of animals, and as a result of high feed costs, young farmers experienced debt. Afterward, some young farmers had to close their businesses by selling their animals.

It is common for young farmers in Kırıkkale to feed animals with feed for twelve months in their holdings. On the other hand, forage planting is not widespread in the province, increasing feeding costs. Operating expenses, especially the high feed prices, force the farmers and causes them to quit cattle breeding.

Despite all these setbacks, it has been determined that young farmers have significantly increased agricultural equipment and animal capital compared to the pre-support. They stated that young farmers are generally satisfied with animal husbandry, and they especially want to continue the animal husbandry profession that they learned from their families. They expect the supports to be given in the following years as well. It was determined that the level of satisfaction with the overall project was higher in YMFs than YWFs, but similar gains were obtained in both groups. YMFs satisfaction with satisfaction was higher than women's, and similar gains were obtained in both groups.

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